MANCHESTER NEW COLLEGE, LONDON.

Address

AT THE CLOSE OF THE SESSION, 1887,

BY THE

REV. H. W. CROSSKEY, LL.D.;

WITH

Addresses

DELIVERED AT THE VALEDICTORY SERVICE,

TO

STUDENTS LEAVING THE COLLEGE,

JUNE 23rd, 1887,

BY THE

REV. JAMES DRUMMOND, LL.D.,

AND THE

REV. H. ENFIELD DOWSON, B.A.

"The College adheres to its original principle of freely imparting Theological knowledge without insisting on the adoption of particular Theological doctrines."

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COLLEGE LIFE:

In its Relationship to the Work of the Christian Ministry.

By H. W. CROSSKEY, LL.D.,

VISITOR OF THE COLLEGE.

GENTLEMEN,

Five years ago, at the request of the Committee, I took part in the proceedings of an occasion similar to the present. Having subsequently received the honour of an official appointment as one of the Visitors of the College, it has become my duty again to attend its examinations, and especially to address you—the students for the Christian Ministry—at the close of another period of your academical career.

I am very strongly disposed to think that few things are more readily brushed aside by young men preparing for the ministry than the experiences of those who, through many long years, have borne the heat and burden of its toils; nor is this altogether without reason.

Speaking for myself, I frankly confess that, were I bluntly asked by any of the young men preparing to take my place, when my brief day's sun shall have set, "what have you managed to do towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon Earth?" I should be compelled to reply, "I cannot answer the question."

I can only humbly hope—I dare do no more than hope—

that by my ministry, reverence for the awful righteousness of the Supreme Lord of all and trust in His deathless love, may have been awakened within some few souls; that here or there I may have comforted a wounded, woful heart; that perhaps I may have given strength to resist temptation to some feeble fainting spirit; that amid the eager claims of pleasure, the cares of business and the pressure of those earthly ambitions which, although flaunting their glorious banners in the four winds of heaven, are doomed to perish in the grave, I may have induced two or three among those who have deigned to listen to my words, to remember the sanctities of the Christ-like life, and that I may have cast into the soil of the present one or two seeds which in the future may perchance bring forth fruit.

I can only say at best what the poet describes as the "at worst"—

> At worst, I have performed my share of the task;
> The rest is God's concern; mine merely this,
> To know that I have obstinately held
> By my own work.

The experience of other ministers of my own generation in our small group of churches will, I imagine, correspond with mine. We can present no splendid ledger account of our failures and triumphs—with a visible balance in our favour. In every hamlet and town of our land, terrible iniquities prey upon the souls of men, which our Christian Churches have not yet succeeded in subduing; there is barbarianism at the heart of our English civilisation. When the grateful luxuries and artistic adornments surrounding modern life are uplifted—as from time to time they are by the hands of some exceptionally reckless victims of passion—a startling and ominous corruption stands revealed.

What wonder that young men ask for larger results than we older ministers can show as the outcome of our labours, and are impatient with long-tried methods which appear to have done so little for the world?

You, young men (I can scarcely question), are gloriously confident that you will form wiser plans of battle against the world's iniquities than those by which your elders were guided, and that you can never fall into their mistakes. Your hearts will respond to the lofty words :—

> New occasions teach new duties ; Time makes ancient good uncouth ;
> They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth ;
> Lo, before us gleam her camp fires ! We ourselves must pilgrims be,
> Launch our *Mayflower*, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
> Nor attempt the Future's portal with the Past's blood-rusted key.

The plans formed by Christian ministers of this quickly passing generation doubtless seem to you more or less monotonous and ineffective.

It is your faith, that the Churches of Christ need new light and new life. That new light you will strive to give, and that new life you will infuse into their faltering activities. I thank God that each young generation of His servants does thus enter into the world to do His work, with garlands and singing robes about them, and filled with the fervour of an unworn enthusiasm. Far be it from me to say that you will not triumph where we, your elders, have failed ; and that you will not win victories which will reduce to insignificance the net result of all our toilsome days.

Nay, I charge you to believe that this laggard world may be moved onward far, far, more quickly than we have been able to urge its steps ; that the winged words of Divine Truth may be sent home to human hearts with a power unknown to our feeble lips ; that the work of God may be done with far more faithfulness than we have ever shown ; that the generation to which you belong may make this earth a happier and a holier dwelling-place for the great family of man than we have imagined it possible for it to become, even in the days of our children's children.

Only remember this,—the greater your dissatisfaction with

the methods pursued by your elders, the heavier your own responsibilities to do better work. Dismiss us, if you choose, as

> Sabbath-drawlers of old saws,
> Distilled from some worm-canker'd homily ;

I care not, if you yourselves will but be

> Spurred at heart with fieriest energy
> To embattail and to wall about your cause
> With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
> The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
> Half God's good Sabbath, while the worn-out clerk
> Browbeats his desk below.

I have made it sufficiently evident that I expect the value of any good advice I may offer to be subjected to a large discount; yet, notwithstanding this, I shall venture to apply some small portion of such knowledge of the world as I have been able to gain, to your conduct and position as students for the Christian Ministry.

The question I put before myself as the subject of this address, is this: Are there any special points of practical difficulty which will meet you in your future careers for which distinct preparation can be made during your College days? Can I tell you of any dangers likely to beset your future paths, touching which to be forewarned will be to be forearmed? I know—and gladly emphasize the fact—that by becoming students for the ministry in this College you are not pledged to enter into the service of any one particular denomination. When you leave these walls you are absolutely free to enter any pulpit that may be opened for your acceptance, according to the decision given by your cultured and ripened judgments, without the violation of any compact either avowed or implied by your residence here. The College is content to send into the world educated men to do God's work in whatsoever way His Holy Spirit, moving within their hearts, may direct. But I also know, as a matter of fact, that all the students I address to-day at present cherish the intention of entering the

ministry of the small group of churches known as Free Christian, Unitarian, or Presbyterian. I shall, therefore, not beat about the bush and indulge in vague generalities, but speak with as much clearness and directness as I can command, of some of the difficulties and dangers it is not improbable you may encounter as you carry on your ministry in the churches to which you propose to attach yourselves. Some of my brethren may not agree with all the representations I shall make; but each man must tell the tale of life in his own way.

The intellectual strain put upon you will be enormous. You will have no short and definite "scheme of salvation" to urge Sunday after Sunday as your primary duty. The preacher in a church based upon the dogmas current in Christendom can never lack a "subject." He has to tell men how the Infinite Lord took flesh and shed His redeeming blood, a theme upon which he has dwelt a thousand times, but which to himself and his hearers is ever marvellous and awe-inspiring, ever fresh and ever new. You will have to bow men down as awe-struck worshippers—if you can—by dwelling on many varied themes with which their religious associations are not yet as passionately up-bound as they are with the ancient dogmas. Your task it will be to make men tremble—if you can—before an ideal of life, before the majesty of creation, before the judgments of God as they are executed in the history of our race. Calm and quiet critics will sit in the pews before you, men and women not easily excited, who certainly will not excuse your ignorance or pardon your mistakes, simply because you are their minister. Crowded congregations will, in all likelihood, seldom challenge you to do your utmost; but you will have to prepare your discourse as carefully for a few dozen people as you would do for hundreds. You will fail—and deserve to fail—if you permit the smallness of the audience you happen to address to lower the character of the religious service you conduct. The authority of a great and powerful visible church

will not stand behind you to support your weakness by the might of its historic and national glory. You will have to hold your own by the aid of such grace as God may give you, and by close and constant communion with the choir invisible

> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence.

No culture you can acquire can be too varied; and no discipline to which you can be healthfully subjected can be too searching and thorough to enable you to meet the intellectual demands which will thus be made upon you.

What do you mean by placing such an emphasis upon these intellectual demands? I can hear some of you exclaim. When we have finished our college course shall we not be bound to preach the simple Gospel of Christ? Are not congregations utterly tired of hearing merely intellectual essays read from the pulpit? Will not our first and foremost duty be to touch the hearts and arouse the consciences of men? Assuredly; I more than admit this. If the overmastering purpose to which you are prepared to devote your coming days be not the redemption of men from their sins and the up-building in righteousness of that Temple which we are, you have no place in the Christian Ministry. But the question at issue refers to the right fashioning and fine tempering of the mind as an instrument to be used for the service of God and man. You will assuredly find a blunt and ill-tempered axe a poor tool for hewing down the trees which bring not forth good fruit. Can a man rise to a greater height of presumption than when, by neglecting due mental preparation for ministerial work, he practically says to his Maker, "O God! I can serve Thee better by my ignorance than by my knowledge"? It is perfectly true that you will not be able to use in the pulpit a vast amount of the learning you acquire at college. Yet, studies which have no connection at all with practical duties are precisely those which have the highest educational value. They cultivate

the pure power of thought, all considerations of worldly interests being eliminated; they cherish the love of knowledge as knowledge; amid the noisy discords of society they bring the mind into a region of great calmness, where it can find refreshing peace and renew its strength.

It is abundantly certain that you can never hope to master the raging passions that drive men to the hell of sin by presenting to them for quiet consideration a metaphysical analysis of their nature. Psychological dissertations cannot redeem from "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." But it is equally clear to me that ignorance of what human nature is, even in those mystic depths philosophy alone can sound, can be of no advantage to those who would uplift the souls of men from their degradation. On the contrary, I have learnt that even blackguards frequently possess considerable intellectual capacity, and that among those moving in more reputable circles who break God's laws, are to be found some of the cleverest of men and women; and I have noticed that appeals to their consciences are in danger of failing in effect when made by those for whose knowledge they have no respect. Believe me, it is a great mistake to treat men whose sins you would rebuke and remove, as though they were utter fools—save in the sense in which fools alone make a mock of sin. I admit that in England great moral reforms have almost always been inaugurated among the untutored masses. They have been less blinded by social interests, and have, therefore, looked more directly into the right and wrong of things than those whose surroundings are too comfortable to be easily sacrificed for the sake of ideas and enthusiasms. But, whenever educated men have been moved to address themselves with passionate earnestness to the iniquities of the world, their high culture has increased by fifty-fold their practical power. They have won a larger influence because they have been recognised as masters who could not be despised. Who has

laid bare as nakedly as the Apostle Paul has, the secrets of the heart in the struggle with sin that goes on in its deepest and darkest recesses? Whose words have pierced the soul as with a two-edged sword as keenly and deeply as Paul's? Who has made men feel more acutely than Paul has, that sorrow for failure to reach the "standard of the perfect man," which brings with it alike penitence and aspiration? Yet, Paul was a metaphysician of metaphysicians, and the most highly educated of all the apostles. When men point to the triumph of "Salvation Army" bands over the coarsely vicious, I reply, "Yes, they have done noble work; but try what bands of educated men could do; quicken their hearts with divine enthusiasm; move them to encounter the wild beasts of the slums; and their triumphs will embrace not simply the abandonment of evil habits, but a steady unfolding of all the faculties and feelings which make life worth living. A discordant jingle of drums and trumpets may awaken slumberers; but sweet and noble music will do more than awaken, it will stir high and blessed thoughts for the continuous sustenance of a diviner life.

It is admitted, without question, that you will never be able to win souls to God by the exercise of logical skill. Arguments, however subtle and elaborate, will prove useless until the soul has learnt to love and hope, to admire and reverence. But, although logic cannot win men to God it is perfectly certain that want of logic may drive them away from Him. In all matters appertaining to religion the use of a bad argument is an unmitigated evil; it arouses antagonism, and lessens the effect of the most fervent moral appeals.

Be sure of this, the habit of self-excuse is the very best protection men have (as we must all know too well from our own experience) against those who would make them discontented with their deficiences and ashamed of their sins. If they see that a professed teacher is arguing foolishly they will make it an

excuse for not heeding his wiser words—whenever it is inconvenient to pay heed to them. To pass difficulties by "on the other side" and ignore them is a fatal mistake. You must measure their strength and fathom their meaning, that your speech may not pass the boundaries of credence. The moment a sceptic perceives that you are evading the point at issue your power will be gone. Nay, unless men see that you know all the depth of the doubt they will not believe that your faith has any firm foundation; they will at once conclude that if you knew more you would believe less. Who amongst us was so unfortunate as to have undertaken the impossible task of supplying the place of Dr. Martineau in Little Portland-street Chapel when George Eliot went to hear him, is so uncertain, and there are so many "respectable old Unitarian" gentlemen amongst us, that I am not in danger of hurting anyone's feelings by quoting the following paragraph from her autobiography, as a warning:—

"I went to Little Portland Street Chapel, and lo! instead of James Martineau, there was a respectable old Unitarian gentleman preaching about the dangers of ignorance, and the satisfaction of a good conscience, in a tone of amiable propriety which seemed to belong to a period when brains were untroubled by difficulties, and the lacteals of all good Christians were in perfect order."—(II. p. 312.)

I will also grant that your knowledge of science will not suffice, any more than your philosophical acquirements or your dialectical skill, to make you preachers of the Gospel of the Beatitudes, and the Lord's Prayer. Yet, I am amazed when I hear men saying, "Do not mix up science with our religion—give us the simple Gospel." What are the "laws of nature" but the laws of God? Earth and heaven and all that in them is were surely fashioned by the very God and Father of Jesus Christ himself. The Lord who said, "Let there be light," and there was light, was He not the Lord unto whom Jesus Christ uttered the prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven"? The glory of earth and heaven seems dreaded in these

modern days, as though it were but the veil of soul-destroying heresies; but the Psalmist, inspired by a grander faith, called upon "Fire and hail; snow and vapours; stormy winds fulfilling His word; mountains and all hills; fruitful trees and all cedars; creeping things and flying fowl," "to praise the name of the Lord; for His name alone is excellent!" Why, I have known even "Free Christians" and Unitarians shocked when a preacher has named the name of Darwin, as though the great discoverers, through whom the actual methods employed by the Creator in the formation and peopling of the world have been revealed, were not the prophets of His changeless will! Do not yield to the poor suspicion that to open men's eyes to the infinite grandeur of the universe, is to lead them away from Christ. Declare the glory of the Parent of all good in His marvellous works!

By so doing, you will bring great peace to many souls. For myself, I know that when wearied with all the toils of my days, saddened that such madness of passion should pervade the affairs of nations, disappointed and grieved that many and many a noble effort made to purify and brighten the lives of men should produce results apparently so slight, forced to the conviction that generation must follow generation, and still the cry must be "how long, how long, oh Lord! wilt thou permit thy children to make cruel war upon their own blessedness?", I turn to those calm orbs above, I gaze upon the fair fields of earth, and my impatience stands rebuked, and I learn to leave with calmness and content my own destiny and the destiny of my race in the hands of Him before whom Science has taught me—as one of her very humblest students—to bow down and say—

> Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong,
> And the most ancient heavens, through thee are fresh and strong.

I beseech you, therefore, students for the Christian Ministry,

throw the energies of your hearts into your most abstract studies. Do not neglect any single part of the course of study arranged for you by professors whose experience enables them to understand what is needful for your training better than you can judge for yourselves. You will have need of all—nay, far more than all—the learning you can possibly acquire. Do not begrudge the years you are asked to spend in preparation for duties which will task the strength of your intellects quite as much as they will test the honesty of your purposes, and sound the depth of the feelings which now move you solemnly to dedicate your lives to the service of the Church of Christ. Most assuredly you will not find that "the foolishness of preaching," as the instrument by which it pleases God "to save them that believe," can be resolved into—the preaching of foolish sermons.

I have already, I trust, made it sufficiently evident that I place so much stress upon your intellectual training, not simply that your own personal culture may be complete, but that the spiritual duties of your future calling may be adequately discharged. One great difficulty in the way of connecting more intimately your present position as students, with your coming responsibilities as ministers, is the necessary vagueness of any descriptions that can be given of the functions of the Free Christian Churches you intend to enter. It is easy to warn you of the heaviness of the task of producing two discourses a week on varied subjects—subjects embracing every point of contact between religious faith and the many branches of human knowledge—and therefore to bid you to be careful of the studious hours now at your uninterrupted disposal; but when the work of a Church as a Church is considered, it is not so easy to bring its special characteristics to bear upon the employments and the conduct of your present lives. On one or two points, however, I will consult my own experience and try to give you aid.

The longer I live the more clearly I see that a minister will

fail—I do not mean in a worldly sense, that is nothing—but fail in the discharge of his duties to the Church of Christ he has undertaken to serve, unless he bears in his heart as in his mind unceasingly, a few great and guiding purposes; and what those purposes should be you ought thoroughly to realize while at college, although the details of their execution must be left until their time comes. As students for the ministry in Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, this kind of preparation is of essential importance. The students in orthodox colleges have strongly impressed upon them the one idea that they are going into the world "to save souls." To you salvation is no such simple matter as it appears to them. You cannot write down in any single formulary the sum and substance of all you have to teach. But what do you propose to yourselves to do when you take charge of a church? What are your ideas beyond, behind, and beneath, the very evident obligation that will be laid upon you to write a large number of sermons as excellently as you can, and to make yourselves generally useful in the communities in which you dwell?

When you become ministers, a considerable proportion of the philanthropic work of your town will be flung upon you; you will be expected to become every man's servant, and multitudinous demands will be made upon your thoughts, your energies, and your time. You will not be able—and you ought not—to put aside these demands. In our large and liberal faith the service of man is the service of God. The Church is not our world, but the world itself is our Church. Unless, however, you are guided by some strong, clear, and well-defined religious purposes—purposes which cover the spiritual meaning, although they dispense with the dogmatic restrictions, involved in what others call the "saving of souls," you will not be Christian ministers in any noble, apostolic sense. What are these strong, clear, and well-defined religious purposes which I call upon you to cherish?

They are not mysterious secrets. Although we do not acknowledge any distinction between what is secular and what is divine—although we call upon literature, science, and art to bring their treasures as tributes to the altar of our God—our religion is not a complicated problem. It will be your high office to sustain the reverence of worship ; to strengthen men against the temptation of their passions, and arouse them from greed and selfishness to the self-sacrificing service of their brethren ; to bring to those who suffer—and in this strange pilgrimage *all* have to suffer more or less bitterly, and the grave is the only place of our perfect rest—the glad tidings of the immortal love. Now, in your student days, meditate upon these high themes ; let them be as a presence and a power that can never be put by. The future of no man so depends upon the thoughts and feelings he cherishes during his college career as the future of the student for the Christian Ministry. A young man may be careless about the deeper sanctities of life, and yet succeed as a lawyer or doctor ; and you also may be similarly careless, and yet learn how to preach decent sermons and gain a reputable social position—but then you will be of far less use in the world than the doctor or the lawyer. A doctor can heal men's diseases and set their broken bones ; a lawyer can settle men's disputes and get them out of their business troubles;—but a minister who merely preaches sermons as a professional obligation, and makes a number of professional calls, and serves professionally on a few committees, and officiates professionally at the Lord's Supper, weddings, and funerals, without having any heart in his work, save as a profession by which he lives, seems to me about as dull and useless a being as can be found among respectable people upon God's earth. He would have a chance of being a finer man did he earn his living by the sweat of his brow.

Would you escape from such a fearful fate as this, you must consecrate your young days with the thoughts and aims

that link this frail life to the Eternal Righteousness and Love. Failing this, you will become merely ministers by profession—the "parsons" whom the world justly despises in its heart, although it pays them the outward respect always given to official persons in the social circles to which they may happen to be attached.

The churches in which you have resolved to minister have not yet had, as it appears to me, any close connection with the passion-tossed world around them. The circumstances of their history have naturally led to this result. They were not organised for purposes of aggression, but in self defence; and they have had to struggle hard for dear life itself. They were founded and have been supported by brave men who have endured cruel persecutions rather than be false to their convictions. The doctrines taught in them, down to 1813, were illegal; their members were excluded, until a comparatively recent date, from holding municipal office, entering Parliament, or enjoying a university education. They have been served by men possessed of that calm, unyielding, patient, and enduring courage which waits as well as toils, and strives as well as waits; creeps on from point to point where creeping alone is possible; never despairs of success because the advance is slow; never misses an opportunity; and never yields an inch of the ground won, fortifying it impregnably against all comers. Whether they were praised or dispraised, popular or unpopular, whether their houses were burnt down or spared, mattered little to these strong, patient, unconquerable men. They were determined to be recognised as free citizens of a free country, and to worship God according to their consciences. Our fathers held opinions which simply shocked the mass of people around them as utterly blasphemous—to an extent it is difficult for us to realise. But they sustained their convictions by their characters. They did their duty to their fellowmen. They conducted their businesses honourably.

Their word was their bond. They could be relied upon to do whatever they undertook. They were emphatically good men.

It is evident, however, that such a history has had a tendency to confine the members and ministers of our churches very much to themselves. Discarded and hated by the world they have sought and found peace where two and three have been gathered together, and have stood aloof from the madding crowd; and as times of repose have come, and their intenser energies have not been called forth into activity, a quiet, tolerant, and inoffensive respectability has been exalted to almost the chief place among the virtues. A tale is told—it is probably legendary, but has at any rate been well invented—of a worthy minister of a past generation, who, moved by the idea that the Ten Commandments were not obeyed with entire perfectness, preached a series of discourses upon them, but, by so doing, horrified his congregation. What (they felt) had they to do with immoral people who could kill, or steal, or commit adultery, or bear false witness? Surely they did not keep such bad companions, and dwelt apart from them in a better world. The time has come, however, when we must prove our inheritence of the spirit by which our fathers did their appointed tasks, by accepting the obligations of the living present, and coming forth from our quiet resting places to cast down the false gods of the world's idolatry and do sterner battle with its sins. Our churches must not die exhausted by the efforts which have won for them a right to live. They must do their work "as alive and not dead," and prove the worth of their gospel as a power to bring the Kingdom of God upon earth. I have dwelt upon these things because I think it of grave importance that you should realise the nature of the warfare in which you will be called upon to engage, before you leave college. The spirit in which you pursue your studies will be deeply affected by the purposes you cherish. You may value your studies as instruments by which you may become accomp-

lished philosophical essayists and acute biblical critics—that is one thing ; or as furnishing material out of which the very "armour of God" may be fashioned, and *that* is another thing altogether !

My anxiety may win me pardon from your professors for venturing to add a piece of practical advice. To prepare yourselves for the warfare of the ministry, from time to time go down to the mission stations in the worst districts of the city, and *try* whether you really have any Gospel to preach that can touch the hearts of the desolate, the poverty-stricken, the miserable, the tempted, and the fallen. Put aside your carefully reasoned college discourse ; leave it behind you in your desk. Do not trouble yourselves about well-turned sentences. Speak right out as men to men ; yet still aim intellectually, as well as spiritually, to do your level best. Mere "goody-goody," unprepared moralising, will pass by your hearers like the idle wind. The effort will stand you in good stead when you address congregations of another type. Sorrow and sin are the same things, whether they abide within the hearts of members of the "upper ten thousand," or the lower thousands of thousands.

Once having learnt directness of speech you will be delivered from the temptation which so easily besets the ministers of respectable congregations, the temptation to be content with delicate and dainty moralisings, and be able to touch the souls of rich and poor alike.

The certainty that in many trying ways the tenacity of your purposes will be tested, makes it imperative for you now to pay watchful heed to the growth of your characters as well as to the increase of your learning.

The patent facts that the number of worshippers in our churches is comparatively small and that their rate of increase is slow, are making some of our congregations impatient. They are crying out for men who, like well-graced actors, will (as the phrase runs) "draw." They are becoming, I am afraid, somewhat

unworthily tired of the educational methods in which our fathers had such a proud and unfaltering confidence.

Far be it from me to deny that those who have to deal with men should study how to move men. The faculty of expressing our thoughts in such a way as not only to make them intelligible but also to induce our hearers to listen, has been, I confess, very partially cultivated amongst us. We have been too confident that men will support us, simply because we have certain rational principles to propound. We have been too timidly afraid of striking out fresh modes of action, and going forth to meet the masses of people who will not of their own accord come to us. But I am bound to bid you beware of artifice, to remember that the influence of wise and good men cannot be measured by the simple process of counting the numbers of their hearers, and to prepare yourselves to endure personal disappointment rather than lower the standard of your teaching and your work.

Those who engage in commercial pursuits or enter into the legal or medical profession, may reasonably look forward to securing a competence for their old age. In their declining years they may hope to enjoy the comforts and even luxuries of life, and to have at least a brief period of rest on earth before they pass to their everlasting rest in God. You cannot, with any certain confidence, cherish a kindred expectation. You may have to work, and work, and work until you are unable to do more.

Nay, perchance it may be that the loftier your purposes the more reason you will have, as the labours of your days near their end, to breathe the poet's sigh—

> You see we're tired, my heart and I,
> We dealt with books, we trusted men,
> And in our own blood drenched the pen
> As if such colours could not fly.
> We walked too straight for fortune's end,
> We loved too true to keep a friend,
> At last we're tired, my heart and I.

Why do I speak of these things? To throw dark and gloomy shadows over your hopes? God forbid! I speak of the sorrowful experiences through which you may have to pass, because I know that the prospect of danger is but an inspiration to brave young hearts, and still more because I know that your future careers will not be what they may be unless, in your student days, you clearly understand that those who follow Christ as their master will have to bear the burden of his Cross.

LESSONS FROM THE PAST.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

By JAMES DRUMMOND, LL.D.,

PRINCIPAL OF THE COLLEGE.

GENTLEMEN,

Among the many faculties by which man is distinguished from the brute, few, perhaps, are more remarkable than his power of casting his mental vision back into the unalterable past, and forward into the uncertain future. He knows himself as part of a race which possesses a history, and is seeking to construct, out of the slowly accumulated resources of by-gone days, a road towards some distant goal which only the imagination can discern. The lordly heir of a thousand generations, he is a humble factor in the formation of the society that is to be; and it is not without a special fitness that he who devotes himself to the furtherance of the Kingdom of God upon earth, should place himself with clear consciousness within the historic line of human progress; and, instead of confining himself like a mountain sheep to the pleasant pastures of the moment, should cast his eye abroad over the wide fields of culture, survey the steps by which he has reached his present altitude, and become familiar with what men of various climes and ages have felt, and thought, and done before him. It is due, then, to no accident that so large a portion of time is surrendered at our College to historical

studies ; and I may venture to recall to your minds a few of the advantages which accrue from such studies to the intending minister of religion,—at least when they are engaged in with the preconceived and sustained interest of intellectual anticipation and acquirement which characterises the sincere student.

The study of history anticipates the lessons of experience, and gives a knowledge of human nature which the individual life, even of widest range, would be inadequate to furnish. We there behold the moving drama of men's thought and action, presented with a variety of circumstance and a magnificence of scale which we cannot hope to witness in our own limited surroundings. Every phase of life, from the most debasing superstition and fiendish crime up to the glorified spirit of the saint and uttermost self-sacrifice for others' good, passes before our eyes. The permanent passions of the heart, the aspirations that rise triumphant over a thousand pretended proofs of their falsity, the convictions that abide when systems of philosophy and science fade before the advancing light, disengage themselves to our view, and the deepest forces of our nature, where it touches divine ground and draws in imperishable life, become revealed in that audience chamber where the greatest no less than the meanest of earth's children put off their reticence, and under no disguise of conventionality speak to us face to face. How poor and shallow compared with this knowledge is that derived from the superficial intercourse which, for the most part, is all that we can gain with living men. What a tragedy is being enacted in many a heart that beats beneath a quiet face ; what a heavenly consecration hallows many a soul that never breathes aloud the love by which its life is swayed. The minister must know these things if he is to speak to them ; and no preaching can be very fruitful that does not go deep down beneath the common-place of daily life, and stir fountains of living water, which flow only at the touch of him who knows what is in man. The very

purpose of his work implies in the minister a knowledge transcending his experience; for he has to reveal men to themselves; to draw forth to light that which has been concealed; to reach some trembling secret of the soul with the assurance of an unexpected sympathy; to arouse the sense of sin and spiritual need behind the smooth propriety of social habit; to waken within the coarse and guilty the slumbering life of the son of God. He alone speaks to us with high and convincing power, who seems to have read our hearts, and to enfold us in a larger humanity than that of any special time and place.

But this searching knowledge could not be derived from the records and literature of the past were it not that they threw a revealing light upon ourselves, and traced in broad lines of illumination the more hidden and subtle passages of our own inward experience. Ultimately our knowledge of man is a knowledge of ourselves; and it is only in the large communion which we enter through the portals of history that the deeper workings of our nature rise into distinct consciousness. The individual nature, when left to its spontaneous growth, is narrow and one-sided, and many a faculty remains folded from the view as though in some unopened shrine. Nay, sometimes the soul's most native impulse sleeps till some voice of power out of the past wakens the responsive thrill, and makes the silent and waiting strings quiver with unimagined music. Thus the life is revealed, and we become the interpreters of other souls to themselves.

But, apart from this kindling of a latent consciousness, it is well for us to learn our limitations, and to look upon realms of human nature where our consciousness either refuses altogether to be kindled, or attains only a faint and sickly glow. Nowhere can we gain this valuable help to humility, that is, to accuracy and impartiality of self-judgment, so well as amid the endless variety of gift, and the world-moving powers which history brings

before us. We may, indeed, if suffering from the poison of self-conceit, use these things to nurse our vanity; for the vain and ignorant man thinks everything foolish that lies out of his beaten path, and in which he has not sufficient intelligence to be interested; and so he thanks God that he is not like other men, and compels the very teachers of humility to foster his empty pride. But those who open their minds to spiritual improvement, and revere, not their own personal endowments, but that human nature which is feebly beginning to blossom within, and which we are all in such danger of dishonouring, will admire the genius which they cannot imitate, will profit by the failures of men of high but limited power; and, as they move with a discriminating reverence amid the great actors in historic scenes, they will lay up treasures of thoughtful and loving wisdom, and will learn to know and to acquiesce with a tender submissiveness in their own failures and limitations.

We learn, further, from history that our limitations may be partly the limitations of the time in which we live. Periods are marked by certain characteristics, and one-sided tendencies of thought work themselves out, through successive generations of thinkers, till they reach results which the normal reason of mankind refuses to accept. Those who tread disdainfully on the scoriæ of extinct controversies, ought to remember that the lava which burns to-day will be cold and hard to the touch of a future generation. It is strange, it is pathetic, to see with what an easy gaiety men drift along the babbling stream of current thought, and yet, like little boys who swim on bladders, they are as proud as though they were moving by a thought of their own, and had once sat meekly at the feet of wisdom. They have dicta which are deemed as unquestionable as any ecclesiastical dogma ever was; and, if you object, you must accept, in place of a reason, an appeal to the *Zeitgeist*, as though the very meaning of the time-spirit did not imply the temporary, the transient, the partial,

which, like all its predecessors, must contribute its coloured ray, and then lose its particular splendour in the pure light of universal truth.

He who has learned these things will distrust the watch-words of the time, and will guard himself against supposing that the time is constituted by the half-dozen men with whom he habitually associates. He will know that even the age cannot be summed up in the battle-cry of a party, and, stepping beyond the age, he will live in a large, unseen fellowship, where the varying voices blend into the harmony, and the notes of successive times unite into the melody of eternal Reason, whose grand anthem in humanity will not be complete till the last mighty chords have been sounded by the latest generation of men. Listening with sympathetic ears to this music, though we cannot anticipate its close, we yet can catch in part its motive and refrain, and can more easily believe that the low and tired wail of a time wearied by material achievement will give place once more to the triumphant hallelujahs of a spiritual era. Through the temporal, the eternal is revealed; and thus, to the seeker after truth, the temporal is at the same moment elevated into a new dignity and deprived of its predominance. In the slow progress of history the Spirit of God is unfolding itself more and more distinctly to man's consciousness; holiness, justice, and love disclose their inner meaning and their practical bearing through human manifestations of them; and the divine laws of life become more clearly apprehended as we see them exemplified in a Son of Man. Thus, the salient points of light, which else would shine with the transiency of a meteor's glow, borrow the permanent illumination of stars; and the particular historical forms, instead of losing themselves in the universal, are clothed by the universal and divine with an abiding significance, just as some great revealing action, though momentary in its performance, shares the lasting nature of its source, and remains in the memory as an open pathway into the soul from which it issued.

It is, then, in accordance with the normal method of intellectual growth, and in obedience to one of our noblest faculties, that we are ranged within an historical religion, and that so much of our collegiate time is given to historical studies. Christianity not only seeks to bring us into timeless relations with the eternal God, but connects us with the slow unfolding of its divine ideas from a distant past, and places us in the progressive organism of a consecrated brotherhood. Though presenting the loftiest truth and the purest morality, it is not a philosophical system or Gnosis, which can be summed up in propositions, or a moral code, which can be adequately set forth in precepts, but a training of the soul into the form of God, an imprinting of the idea of divine sonship on our humanity, and a revealing of all the contents of that idea to our spiritual apprehension. It is chiefly through the contemplation of finite shapes, through flashes of eternal glory amid the phenomenal scene, through the indwelling of a supreme majesty in the form of a servant, that these are brought home to our minds. It is well, indeed, to have lonely hours reserved for God, when we lose all sense of the earthly and the transitory in the consciousness of his changeless love, but it is oftenest through the fellowship of departed saints that we are borne to this height; and it is when Moses and Elijah and Christ, surrounded by a dim multitude of the faithful of every age, have been with us on the mount that we descend most easily to mingle with the toilers of earth, to see them, too, touched with the radiance of the immortal world, and to render to them, as brethren, a lowly and loving service.

And now, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Muirhead, you are to go forth to devote yourselves more exclusively than hitherto to this service. Your minds have been enriched by a long period of study; and whether through the records of classical antiquity or of biblical and ecclesiastical times, whether in tracing the slow development of philosophical thought or in exploring the treasures

of our literature, you have gained a larger communion with mankind than the little circle of our College could afford, and now you have to bear to your brethren the lessons of a large wisdom and the helpfulness of a many-sided sympathy, and to make articulate within them the dumb aspirations of their hearts. Be considerate towards those who are not like-minded, remembering that the ways of God are manifold, and that even the good are not without their weaknesses and failings. Be gentle and patient as you are brave and faithful; and bear away with you and cherish this one truth which all history teaches, that love is the revealer, the redeemer, the sanctifier of men, and that only as love dwells within us can we work for good or speak with saving power. I trust our connection will not be wholly severed, but you will retain a corner in your hearts for the Academy where we have sought for truth together, as we on our side shall follow your careers with the interest of a sincere regard, and with best wishes for your truest happiness and success. On behalf of the College, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

ADDRESS

OF

WELCOME INTO THE MINISTRY.

By H. ENFIELD DOWSON, B.A.

My Dear Brothers,

I stand here to-night to welcome you into a ministry in which, for nearly a quarter of a century, I have had a humble share; and, as I do so, I think that I can do no better than tell you, as simply and truly as I can, of what character I have found the work of a minister to be.

Now, I am quite in the spirit to-night to welcome you into this ministry, which is the goal that you have reached at the conclusion of your studies, with words of encouragement. I know how solemn a moment this is for you; I know how your eyes scan the future, and how earnest are your desires for the fulfilment in it of your highest and holiest aspirations. This beginning of a career is to all of us the most unspeakably important thing; it is the occasion of vows, of prayers, of hopes; and is full of unextinguishable longings. And of no career is this so true as it is of a minister's. A minister who does not enter on his work with a burning enthusiasm and with abounding hopes, can never fulfil its demands. I am sure you stand, as it were, at the barrier to-night, looking forward with souls eager for a race in which it is your ambition to run with all your might, and, if it

may be, to win some prize of success. God speed you, my dear brothers; God help you to secure your most earnest desires. I am with you with all the sympathy of my nature. I can remember well what it was to be as you are now, with all my ministerial life before me. I can remember the glow of hope and the prayer for achievement. I would I could change places with you and begin afresh; I might do much more to fulfil my hopes and my prayers than I have done, God knows.

But, in what even I have found in the ministry, there is enough to enable me to speak to you, not in words of any sort of discouragement, but in the language of an ever-increasing joy in the work. Yes, I thank God to-day more than I ever did, that I have the highest privilege on earth,—that of being a minister of Christ. I welcome you, my brothers, into the most blessed and happy of fellowships. I have no whisper of a doubt in my mind in according to you this glad welcome. I think that ours is the most glorious and delightful of earthly callings. Its interest never tires. Of course, there is drudgery to be done. There is drudgery in every calling. A minister's is no exception. He is not worth much who cannot stand drudgery; there is nothing more healthy for mind or body.

But the work of the ministry is full of the noblest and purest inspirations. The subjects of contemplation and of study are the most sublime.

All men and women are to be envied whose very duty in life and whose chosen calling lift them up into high realms of thought, and open the windows of their minds to rays of divinest light and truth. It must be glorious to be a man of science, to spend days and nights worshipping in God's temple of the universe.

What an infinite joy in the cry, "Eureka"! To discover some new truth; to go out with piercing vision into new and untrodden realms of knowledge; to find the clue to some one of

nature's hidden mysteries; and to see rising before the mind a larger and sublimer universe than was ever dreamt of before;—this must be an entrancing delight. The man of science is to be regarded as one of the most favoured of mortals.

What a blessing, too, must follow the career of the poet, thinking out high thoughts and clothing them in beautiful utterance! It is a life of communion with a diviner realm, and of the deliverance of the inspired soul of the pregnant ideas and the fair images with which it is tenanted. The artist—who can rival him in his delight? one might be tempted to ask. To live with nature; to sit at her feet, to know her every look and study her every beauty; to do this as the very work of life; this must be a very paradise of joy; and to see the beauty without rising once more into being, as the hand re-creates it on the canvas—this must be an immeasurable happiness. In these pursuits the interest must be unfailing.

I claim for the ministry an interest as deep; aye, deeper far. I claim for it the highest of earthly joys—that of holding intercourse with the life of God. It becomes the minister's task to spend his life studying the sublimest subject in the universe; thinking his way into it; falling in reverence at the feet of God, and looking into His face; the world's religious literature is his special field; the words of noblest inspiration lie open before him; they are there for him to read; it is his to give his best time and thought to reading them. What a high pursuit! what a glorious occupation! God has chosen you and me for this, my dear brothers; let us thank Him for His mercy, that we have not to spend the best of our time in any mere physical toil, or in just earning a livelihood in business; but that we are called by our daily duty to the contemplation of the deepest subjects that can fill the human mind! It is a privilege and blessing indeed.

But that is far from being all. The minister's studies are a

source of unfailing interest and inspiration and joy; but his work is only beginning with these. Did it end with these, the best life would be taken out of it. It would be self-centred. That is a melancholy thing for any one. To work just for ourselves takes the joy out of any occupation. There are none whom I pity so much as those who seem to have no end beyond themselves. There are many with high interests and high tastes, who go on cultivating just their own minds and enjoying their own intellectual luxuries, but they never use for others their stored knowledge. Nothing comes of it all.

Now, the glory of a minister's career is that he is in this the servant of others; that all that he gains for himself of thought or knowledge, all his deepest insight into the things of God, is not for himself alone, but for his brothers and his sisters. He is an ambassador for Christ, he goes forth from his study to speak the truth that is in him, for the benefit of mankind. His work is to save human souls by his message.

I have often thought what a pleasure must attend the life of a physician or a surgeon. He goes from house to house to bring with him his saving skill. He enters doors to see sickness and suffering, anxiety and sorrow depicted on many a face; he is able again and again to heal or to cure, and in doing so to relieve more than the body—many an aching heart. What a joy to do this, to be the means of restoring health and life and the happiness that returns with them to all around the sick bed! Thank God! as I speak to-night, I cannot help thinking how happy and blessed much of the world's work is.

But, if there is this happiness in a medical man's calling, saving, as it does, the bodies of his patients, is there not far higher and nobler joy in the calling of a minister, whose aim it is to cure souls, to quicken and refresh lives, to bring down into homes the very Spirit of God, and to transfigure and ennoble the characters of men? Yes, this communion with the life of God,

this intercourse with the Divine Holiness, sends the minister forth with the gospel which it has taught him, a glorious messenger who can bring light and life and hope to many a dark place of the earth, and who can lift up and strengthen many a human soul! Aye, and to have lived to purify and ennoble one human being, to have brought one child of God to his Heavenly Father's arms, is worth all the effort of a lifetime. He who in his inmost soul can say that there is one man or woman or child to whom he has delivered a message of salvation, has a thought that should make an angel happy. Yes, if there is such a thing as the enthusiasm of humanity, it is the minister who should know its most priceless joy; he is engaged in the purest form of beneficent activity, and he confers the most deathless and most perfect blessings.

A man will sacrifice his life with gladness to save a dear one from physical danger or death, and will feel his heart beat with happiness as he does it. It is the minister's exceeding delight to spend and be spent in bringing men and women into the felt presence of God, and into His kingdom of righteousness. It is the highest and most blessed form of human beneficence. Let us thank God that we are called to it.

Alas! however, we cry, "Is this but a beautiful unrealised vision"? It is our grand work. But do we do it?

To every minister there come times of discouragement. When we think of ourselves, we are all discouragement; when we compare our calling and its fulfilment, we are down in the dust; and there are many things that sometimes make us downhearted. I own I am often so about the influence of preaching. I am inclined to think that it does not come to much. A gentleman walks into the vestry with much unction, and thanks you for your beautiful sermon; but you don't care for that; compliments of that kind are no good. Will the effect of the sermon last beyond the Sunday dinner? Have you roused any souls

from sleep? Have you really made a diviner light shine in them? That is the vital question. Well, often, may be, you have not. But it is your fault; it is not the fault of the calling; it is not the fault of your message. No. Let us take the thought off our poor accomplishment and think of our mission, and think of the message that we have to give, and then there can be no discouragement or down-heartedness. All that we have to do is to be utterly faithful to the truth of God within us, and then the humblest utterance will go home to human hearts. The failure of a great deal of preaching lies in this, that it is not thus faithful; it is conventional; it is not real; it has not been a deliverance of the soul, but it has been a speaking of what was supposed to be the correct thing; the bucket has not been sent down into the well within the soul to bring up whatever of truth or life it might find there; but there has been just an endeavour to ape the professional religious language of the day. It is the very perdition, that. The only rule is never to say a word more, and never to say a word less than one thinks!

To be true to the very utmost to conscience and to God—that is the beginning and the ending of a preacher's power. Never to rest on an audience; never to ask what an audience will like—that is the elementary necessity of any faithful ministry. To be brave, without bravado, but in all simple earnest sincerity—that is the way to preach a living gospel. And I care not where such a preacher may preach, he will have a moral power that is bound to tell. And speaking of the joys of the ministry, I say that none is greater than that of delivering the soul with utmost fidelity. Come what may of this deliverance at the moment, there is an irresistible sense that a good seed has been sown, and that, however humble the sower, the good fruit will be borne some day.

I have referred to the happiness of the ministry in the com-

munion which it brings with God and His truth, and in the work of delivering faithfully God's word of life to men.

But the blessedness of being a minister is found in many ways beside. There is nothing more delightful than the relations between a true pastor and his people. I have infinite faith in the work of an earnest and true minister in the homes of those to whom he ministers.

Here let me bear my testimony to the kind welcome that a minister receives from the laity. He is allowed, if he only uses the privilege in the true way, to enter each household in his congregation as a trusted friend; his is a place there on every occasion of greatest joy and deepest sorrow; he is admitted into the holy of holies of domestic life; he is there when hearts are touched, and when the deepest impressions are made; this is the most priceless of privileges; it is one that I prize higher and higher with each advancing year. We ministers are brought face to face—in the homes of our people—with the most solemn scenes on earth; we drink in the spirit of the eternal, face to face with eternity.

To have stood with our people hand in hand, gazing into the infinite, and resting on God, is a link never to be broken and never to be forgotten. It gives us a place in their hearts as friends; this is the secret of being a pastor, just simply to be a friend down in the living depths, in the time of personal need, in the time of sorrow, aye, and of joy—for joy needs sympathy as well as sorrow. There is an inexpressible happiness in his personal contact, when it is genuine. No professional visits are the smallest good; they are worse than useless. A minister who is not just a man among men, a friend with friends, is no pastor; but to be the friend, trusted and beloved in home after home, is enough to fill a life with deathless interest. And what happiness can be found like that of going about from one to another in some trouble, and seeing faces brighten as one comes,

and feeling that something has been done, to make homes happier or better?

There is a ceaseless delight in pastoral work. Never to forget, and never to neglect, the needs of individuals for anything under the sun, is a golden rule. To follow it was one trait in the character of our late dear Bishop of Manchester, and one cause of the love in which he was held.

And finally, there is a crowning blessing in this pastoral activity, that it brings with it endless inspiration; the living mind is a book as much worth reading, and as inspiring as any ever written; and the true pastor often returns from some visit with a pregnant thought stirring his mind to its depths and enriching his spiritual life.

On many grounds, therefore, my brothers, I welcome you to this happy Ministry of Christ, as the most blessed calling beneath the sun.

H. Rawson & Co., Printers, 16, New Brown Street, Manchester.—[7520.]